

Spontaneity in Everyday Space: Linking Social And Spatial Through an Urban Design Perspective

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The preconceptions of urban planners and designers for a physical environment may fail as everyday users start to employ it. This mismatch is caused by spontaneity that is innate to every person, making them behave and decide according to their natural drives. The postulate is that spontaneity is reflected in urban space, calling for an updated human-oriented urban theory and analysis. With the literature survey, the main aspects of spontaneity in space are set as spatiality, temporality, and agency. This idea is developed through an interpretation of spatial dialectics from an urban design perspective connecting the designed and lived spaces. This theoretical basis is explored with a novel methodological framework entitled as spatial design ethnography realized in a busy central street called Yüksel Street in Ankara-Turkey. Still holding on to its first physical layout in macro scale, the street is being (re)made subtly through the countless micro interventions of its users. To reveal these micro patterns and understand the relation between designed and lived space, the PhD research has been divided into three analytical sections. In this paper, a special emphasis will be given to the first section (spaces for people) that discusses the historical socio-spatial development of the street. This is to reveal the morphological development together with the transformations in the social life; and to create the archive of everyday through analyzing the former plans, urban design schemas, memoirs, old maps, and pictures.

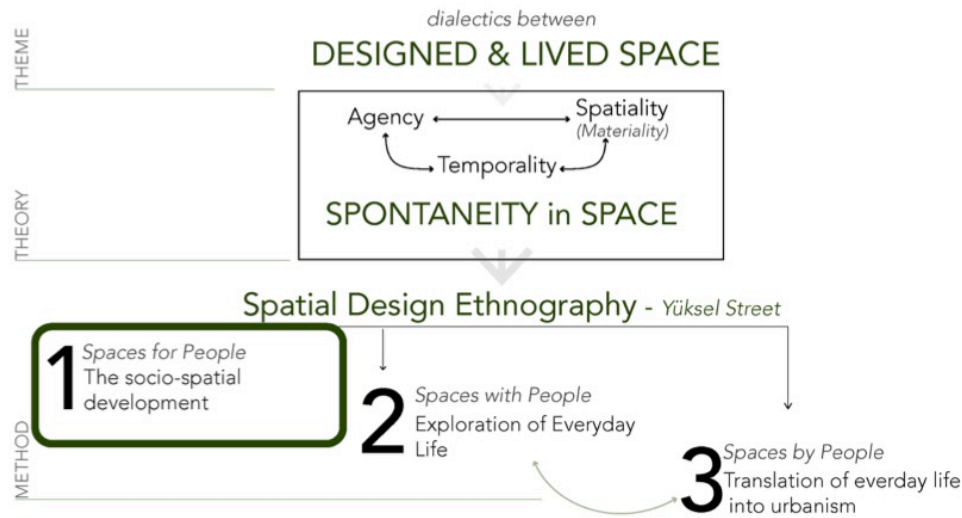
Research Synopsis

This research focuses on the dialectics between designed and lived space defending that spontaneity is an overlooked yet fundamental human characteristics that is revealed in the formation of physical environment. For this, the main research question is stated as “How can we theorize and analyze the dialectics between designed and lived spaces through situating spontaneity within urbanism?” This is believed to give urban studies a way to address the knowledge gap between the everyday life and spatial design through the interpretation of spontaneity from an urbanism perspective. For the theoretical framework, this interpretation is made after an insightful literature survey encompassing many fields from philosophy to positive sciences to unfold the aspects of spontaneity. The outcome of this is that there are three indivisible aspects of agency, temporality, and spatiality for us to discuss spontaneity in spatial terms. Simply, to understand the post-design process of urban space that makes it a living entity, we need to value the form production by many users through everyday interventions at different time intervals.

This theoretical basis is explored with a novel methodological framework entitled as *spatial design ethnography* and tested in a busy central street called Yüksel Street in Ankara-Turkey. Still holding on to its first physical layout in macro scale, the street is being (re)made subtly through the countless micro interventions of its users. Spatial design ethnography aims to bring together the agency and materiality while (social and spatial; ethnography and spatial analysis etc.) to understand the ordinary users' impacts on urban space by integrating various modes of data collection and analysis. The research has been divided into three sections as the empirical study starts in Yüksel Street. The first section (spaces for people) analyzes the former plans, plan reports, memoirs of the inhabitants, old maps, and pictures to reveal the morphological development and to find clues for the archive of everyday. This brings out the second part of the analysis that investigates the instances and rhythms of the everyday life (spaces with people). For this, longitudinal fieldwork encompassing the recording of everyday life, participant observation, photo documentation, behavioural mapping, interviews with users, owners of surrounding buildings has been conducted. The last section (spaces by people) unveils the unique ways of urban space appropriation from a designerly perspective to develop a translation from everyday life and space to urban design operations and principles. This section is closely related to the findings of the second phase of the analysis yet tries to re-evaluate the findings with respect to the initial postulates stated in the theoretical framework.

Within this paper, a special emphasis will be given to the initial analysis section that discusses the historical socio-spatial development of Yüksel Street [fig.1]. This is to understand the planning and design ideology that not only shaped the physical tissue but also altered the social life and, in turn, transformed by it. The space that is produced for people has a background story of the ongoing social, economic, political transformations. Therefore, to have an insight of the everyday life and space of the street, its past will be unfolded. The data has been collected through archival study that has been conducted in two main city archives of Ankara, namely VEKAM (Vehbi Koç University Library) and METU-CRP (Middle East Technical University - City and Regional Planning). The former city plans, old photographs, local newspaper articles are gathered from these archives. Besides this visual collection, the plan reports, books and memoirs constituted the textual information that helps to uncover the dynamics that created the Yüksel Street. The former and current urban plans were rectified geographically through the map warper software. This analysis

will be conducted to track down the basic and most important morphological changes along the street. The main reason to conduct this spatial analysis is to put together the physical imprints of social life and change in everyday life. The aforementioned data does not always cover the street itself, but the surrounding urban area that it is located within.



[fig.1] The flow of the research and the focus of this paper as stated within a green rectangle

Source: Elaborated by the author

Yüksel Street: Planning History and Social Life

Yüksel Street is one of the planned streets surrounded by the residential areas in early planning phases of Ankara. That is also clear that the street has faced many alterations not only in its formal plan regulations but also informalities accumulated in time. Today it is still one of the important pedestrian streets in the heart of the city center supported by a diverse set of land uses generating an ever-changing and rich social life. Hence, it is a highly suitable case site to elaborate on the dialectics of designed and lived space, providing not only a rich material in terms of planning history but also a spontaneous way of making of the everyday life and space. In order to grasp the current socio-spatial condition of the street, it is essential to know its past both in terms of spatial and social history.

On the Eve of Republic (1920s)

To record the everyday life is crucial for a city like Ankara since it does not have the well-known means of what defines an urban land such as the continuum of the interrelation among people through centuries or ages-old urban elements such as squares, rivers, houses or cafés (Miser 2001, p.91). However, the city has many witnesses making it closer to the urban by refreshing the young memory of the city. To narrow down the scale and time period, this study focuses on the beginning of the urbanization period in the city in the beginning of 20th century in which Ankara was no more than a deprived settlement as stated below (Atay in Çankaya, 1969, 505; cited in Tanyer 2006):

“The station, then the swamp, then the graveyard, after decrepit Karaoğlan, the site of the fire; and once the end of that is reached village with crooked streets, without pavements or just paved with rough cobblestones. Adobe huts or mud-brick houses”



[fig.2] City View in 1922 by Lansere
Source: Ankara Yazı - 2004



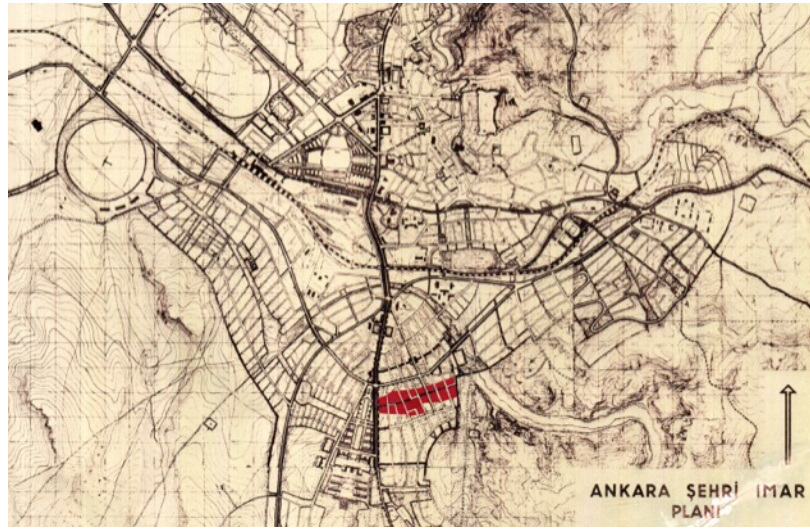
[fig.3]. Ankara 1929
Source: Atılım University Digital Archive

Before the foundation of the republic and the declaration of Ankara as the capital of Turkey (1923), the city is described as being a village-like-town in the middle of the naked step land. The daily life of people was closely attached to the houses and public spaces in and around the Ankara castle. This tranquil life was enriched with the short-time migrations to the vineyards during summer which was not only a free time but also a working period that the families made living and get ready for the winter (Günes 2013, 15). A Soviet painter Lansere illustrates the life in the city in 1922 [fig.2, fig.3]. He paints the everyday life of this “quiet and poor” city as still living in the middle ages. The spatial traces such as crooked and narrow streets the handicrafts overflow to these streets from the shops stroke him deeply. Lansere (2004, p.22) states that:

"Despite the rumors about the laziness of the eastern men, the hard working people I see here amaze me... However, although they have never been conquered since the time of Timur, the lack of decorations and embellishments in the houses and furniture is striking. There seems to be nothing attractive...The people go to walking in the evening, they walk to the lakes where there are tables along the water or to the barracks serving tea or coffee near the water streams."

The Creation of the Capital (1920s-1950s)

This tranquil and small-scale settlement was about to face an influential transformation in political, intellectual and economic contexts as well as in social life and urbanism. Following the Republican revolution in 1923, Ankara has been selected as the capital despite the lack of means of accommodation, accessibility, and administration. This forgotten step village was transforming into the main city of the new republic, almost symbolizing the passage from an unsettled society to a nation (Bischoff; cited in Azakoglu 2015, 163). This transformation had started with the first urban plan idea initiated by the state. The plan was aware of the greatest changes that the declaration of capital would bring. This would not only be a pressure of transformation of a village into a city but to a center of government of a country (Jaussey 1929, p.11).



[fig.4] First Urban Plan of Ankara by Hermann Jansen (1932) - Yüksel Street and Its Vicinity Highlighted with Red
Source: METU-CRP Archive

The first urban plan of the city was prepared by Lörcher (1924-1925). The plan supported the development in and around the old city center (Cengizkan 2014). However, the need of housing and administrative buildings overcame the planning scheme, therefore by 1932, Jansen Plan was approved to correspond these changes of the increase both in population and altering needs [fig.4]. This process brought not only the changes in the physical tissue as in the construction of new neighborhoods, city centers, public institutions but also the alterations in the urban activities in cultural, commercial and recreational contexts. The development of the New City (*Yenişehir or Kızılay*) adjacent to the south edge of the old city center was promising a first planned model of urbanization in the country. The construction of residential areas was crucial and urgent to accommodate both the residents of Ankara and new comers. This speed of the implementation process together with the urban plan created absurd sceneries in daily life during the period of construction [fig.5]. When we think of an open steppe land in the south of the old city center and the scattered building constructions with lack accessibility, it is not surprising to read this excerpt from the book *Çankaya* written by Atay (1980, p.371):